THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

December/January 2020-21 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

On Pigrimage

by Dorothy Day

Editor's Note: The following are excerpts from an article, written at the Tivoli, New York CW Farm, which appeared in the September 1974 Catholic Worker.

A beautiful calm, quiet day. How beautiful silence is. How beautiful all nature around us, as the Queen Anne's lace in a brown vase on my window sill, made from a beer bottle by my grandson-in-law, John Houghton.

This morning my Scripture reading was interrupted by Tommy Turner bringing a large jar with something fascinating to show to Joshua, the small boy who has the room next to mine, with his mother. Joshua was already out and around, so his father, who was bringing me *The New York Times*, brought Tommy and his find in to me. It was the tiniest little snake I have ever seen, all curled up, not more than two or three inches long. A beautiful, perfect, little bit of life.

"The world will be saved by beauty," Dostoevsky wrote, and Solzhenitsyn quoted it in his Nobel talk. I look back on my childhood and remember beauty. The smell of sweet clover in a vacant lot, a hopeful clump of grass growing up through the cracks of a city pavement. A feather dropped from some pigeon. A stalking cat. Ruskin wrote of "the duty of delight," and told us to lift up our heads and see the cloud formations in the sky. I have seen sunrises at the foot of a New York street, coming up over the East River. I have always found a strange beauty in the suffering faces which surround us in the city. Black, brown and grey heads bent over those bowls of food, that so necessary food which is always there at St. Joseph's House on First St., prepared each morning by Ed Forand or some of the young volunteers. We all enter into the act of hospitality, one way or another. So many of those who come in to eat return to serve, to become part of the "family."

I am at Tivoli. I cannot help but be mindful of St. Joseph's House and worry about Maryhouse on Third St., the new house for women which will be filled up as soon as we get a certificate of occupancy (God grant we can move in before the cold weather sets in). Weeks pass and the building department of the gigantic city of New York has not found time to put the O.K. on the plans drawn up by our first-rate architect to turn the former music school back into a residence. More bathrooms needed, steel, self-closing doors on each bedroom. Now fire-retardant halls are required, and what is going to happen to those beautiful, wide staircases and banisters!

Patience, patience. I often reflect that the word itself means suffering. "Take up your cross and follow me." But, "**My yoke is easy, my burden light**," Jesus said. You learn what He meant only if you keep praying about it. "Oh God, make haste to help us!"

...This morning I was feeling the need of words of joy in the face of the world situation, and the political situation in

(Continued on Page 2)

Follow Your Dreams

by Emily D. Luna

Tianbin

Editor's Note: The following poem was written by a teenager. We would do well to pay attention to her.

Follow your dreams.
You won't disagree.
Failure is in the past,
So get over that fast.

Always be who you are,
And don't let anyone tell you what to do.
Do what you love,
And failure won't follow you.

I gave you advice,
And I hope it worked.
Do what you like,
And don't be bossed around by a jerk. Ω

I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.

Rabindranath Tagore

Pilgrimage

(Continued from Page 1)

this country. (I must give up reading newspapers in order to avoid any bitterness when I witness the destitution in our cities, the lack of housing, the humiliation of the poverty stricken, and on the other hand, the arrogance of some men of wealth. "Woe to ye rich!" And the talk is of pensioning ex-President Nixon, who with a life of crime behind him has the affrontery to name his successor, who in turn names his Vice President, a Rockefeller, who came back from a visit to Brazil to advise more subsidizing of that country to fight subversion. But "God is not mocked."

Ade Bethune

Attica is not forgotten.

Martin Sostre is back in Clinton Prison, our jails are filled with Blacks, Indians and Puerto Ricans. Puerto Rico itself is being taken over by oil interests. Its harbors are deepened for giant oil tankers, and its interior farm lands are being taken over for refineries. Thank the dear Lord that the opposition to all these injustices goes on.

In cleaning my room this morning I found an old diary in which I had written down bits from things I was reading at the time. Here are the lines I had copied from a book by Father Van Zeller, a Benedictine monk who wrote a series of small volumes on the prophets, and this was Daniel, Man of Desires. The sentence ran, "To say sad things cheerfully, was so absolutely necessary to the age in which he lived.... His message, unlike Jeremias, Job, or Hosea, was clothed in words of joy."

St. Thomas said once he learned more by prayer than he did by study, and it is only prayer that will give us a full life of joy, a word which George Bernanos and C.S. Lewis alike took as meaning more than happiness.

A deep, abiding joy can only be ours if we emphasize the "primacy of the spiritual," a phrase which Peter Maurin loved. We must grow in faith, in our spiritual capacity to "do all things in Him who strengthens us," even change the social order so that wars will cease and it will be easier to be good, to keep our sanity, be whole [people], holy [people,] and truly love one another. If [human beings] can walk on the moon, why not?

If we were followers of Jesus, we too could multiply loaves and fishes and save the world.... Ω

French Muslims Protect Church

Angela Charlton

Editor's Note: This article is excerpted from an Associated Press story which appeared on November 7, 2020 in The Worcester Telegram & Gazette.

As a French-born Muslim, Elyazid Benferhat's stomach turned when he heard about a deadly Islamic extremist attack on a church in Nice. Then he decided to act.

A self-described man of peace and pragmatism, Benferhat and a friend gathered a group of young Muslim men to stand guard outside their town's cathedral for the All Saints' holiday weekend, to symbolically protect it and show solidarity with the Catholic churchgoers.

Parishioners at the 13th-century church in the southern town of Lodeve were deeply touched. The parish priest said their gesture gave him hope in a time of turmoil....

While his mother was born in Algeria, he was born in France and grew up speaking only French. "But I am also a Muslim...and we have seen Islamophobia in this country, and terrorism. In recent years, I've had a pit in my stomach," because every time Islamic extremist violence strikes France, he said, French Muslims face new stigmatization, even through "we had nothing to do with it."

He called the beheading of a teacher near Paris last month—targeted because he showed his class caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad for a debate on free expression—an act of "unbelievable, unprecedented cruelty."

Then when three people were killed in the Notre Dame Basilica in Nice, Benferhat said "We needed to do something beyond paying homage to the victims. We said, we will protect churches ourselves".... Ω

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Why Am I Still a Catholic?

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

The Catholic Worker movement proclaims pacifism, anarchism, and simple living. The Catholic Church proclaims the Just War Theory, an all-male hierarchy, and oftentimes opulence. Many Catholic Workers never were Catholic, some have left it behind, and others downplay their Catholic connection.

When I look at other Christian denominations, I see attributes I admire. Orthodox priests marry and have children. Quakers are pacifists. Methodists, Episcopalians, and others have women clergy. Democracy rules in the Congregational Church. The laity, in many Protestant churches, interviews, hires, and fires their clergy.

Over the past twenty years in Worcester, rallies against war, gun violence, and racism have often included Protestant, but seldom Catholic clergy. More often than not, the Catholic Worker is the solitary Catholic voice for peace and justice. When one adds the sex abuse scandal to everything else, it can seem like a moral imperative to leave the Catholic Church.

But then I think about Dorothy Day. She was an educated socialist and champion of justice who embraced the Catholic Church when it was considerably more authoritarian, sexist, militarist, and capitalist than it is nowadays. The liturgy wasn't even in English at that time. What could a quintessentially American woman see in such a reactionary and superstitious institution?

Not particularly religious, Dorothy's upbringing, nonetheless, left her with a general acceptance of God and the New Testament. After many life challenges, she found herself praying daily and sometimes in the back pews of Catholic churches filled with immigrants. Gradually, she came to believe in the Sacraments and the Communion of Saints. She didn't join the Catholic Church because it was perfect, but because it drew her closer to perfection. I suspect that a bride and groom who believes he or she has found a flawless partner, is likely to end up in divorce court.

For myself, a Catholic whose father left the Church after Vatican II, I never felt religious pressure. Stories I heard about Jesus at Mass left lasting good impressions. The notion that, no matter how horribly I failed in life, I could be forgiven by Jesus, just like the woman caught in adultery, drew me. Becoming one with Jesus, and at the same time with the entire mystical body of Christ in the Eucharist, simply blew me away.

My experience in many parishes and especially as a novice for the Capuchin Franciscans taught me that clerics do not have exclusive rights on holiness. At the start of his pontificate, when a reporter asked Pope Francis, "Who is Jorge Bergoglio?" he replied, "A sinner."

I drew hope from novels like Fyodor Dostoeyevsky's *The Brothers Karamovoz* and Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*, wherein deeply flawed characters find the grace to make God present in dire circumstances.

I lost track of this humility as a young peace activist, when I thought of holiness as a kind of checklist of political positions and actions that I had mostly completed. After Claire and I invited Liz McAlister, the long-time anti-war and disarmament activist, to give the homily at our wedding, I hoped she would validate our life choices to skeptical members of the congregation, but I was disappointed. Instead of saying we should all go to jail for peace, she said we each needed "to be signs, not saviors." "What the heck did that mean?" I wondered then, but now I treasure those words. As a Catholic, my vocation is not to be perfect, but to, with God's grace, be holy enough to point to absolute perfection.

Activism, simple living, and performing the works of mercy made me proud, but the Church reminded me to "**Be still and know that I am God**." Worshipping with complete strangers, kneeling like them before the same altar, my self-righteousness turned into appreciation for community, one that reaches into every corner of the earth.

Genesis says, "**It is not good for a human to be alone.**" Living in community, starting with family and moving on to the Catholic Worker, my parish, and the Church, sustains me and strengthens my public witness. I cannot enumerate how many times my life has been saved by others, even strangers, in one of these communities.

When someone said to Father Dan Berrigan, "The Catholic Church is so corrupt, I'm leaving," he replied, "Great idea! Where are we going?" His words remind me of Saint Peter's reply to a very discouraged Jesus who asked the apostles, "**Will you leave me too?**" to which Peter said, "**Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life**."

To me, Catholicism is a gold mine that I have only begun to explore. Like many religious traditions, a single lifetime could not provide me time to even scratch the surface of the wisdom embedded in its bosom.

And since the Second Vatican Council proclaimed that the Catholic Church is the people of God, I know that everything I do as a Catholic either disparages or elevates the Church. None of us have to wait for the Pope or a parish priest to tell us to follow Jesus, but, at the same time, the Pope or a parish priest might inspire us to sainthood.

That's good enough for me. Ω

We Are All Siblings

by Pope Francis

Editor's Note: The following are excerpts from Fratelli Tutti, *an encyclical letter by Pope Francis relased on October 3, 2020 at the tomb of Saint Francis in Assisi.*

Today, in many countries, hyperbole, extremism and polarization have become political tools. Employing a strategy of ridicule, suspicion and relentless criticism, in a variety of ways, one denies the right of others to exist or to have an opinion. Their share of the truth and their values are rejected and, as a result, the life of society is impoverished and subjected to the hubris of the powerful.... In this craven exchange of charges and counter-charges, debate degenerates into a permanent state of disagreement and confrontation.

...In today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia.... True, a worldwide tragedy like the COVID-19 pandemic momentarily revived the sense that we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person's problems are the problems of all. Once more we realized that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together. ...We are part of one another, brothers and sisters of one another.

...All too quickly, however, we forget the lessons of history, "the teacher of life." Once this health crisis passes, our worst response would be to plunge even more deeply into feverish consumerism and new forms of egotistic self-preservation.

Unless we recover the shared passion to create a community of belonging and solidarity worthy of our time, our energy and our resources, the global illusion that misled us will collapse and leave many in the grip of anguish and emptiness.... The notion of "every man for himself" will rapidly degenerate into a free-for-all that would prove worse than any pandemic.

Certain populist political regimes, as well as certain liberal economic approaches, maintain that an influx of migrants is to be prevented at all costs. Arguments are also made for the propriety of limiting aid to poor countries, so that they can hit rock bottom and find themselves forced to take austerity measures. One fails to realize that behind such statements, abstract and hard to support, great numbers of lives are at stake. Many migrants have fled from war, persecution, and natural catastrophes. Others, rightly, "are seeking opportunities for themselves and their families. They dream of a better future and they want to create the conditions for achieving it."

Marty Jones

Despite these dark clouds, which may not be ignored, I would like in the following pages to take up and discuss many new paths of hope. For God continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family. The recent pandemic enabled us to recognize and appreciate once more all those around us who, in the midst of fear, responded by putting their lives on the line. We began to realize that our lives are interwoven with and sustained by ordinary people valiantly shaping the decisive events of our shared history: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caretakers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests and religious… They understood that no one is saved alone.

The Book of Job sees our origin in the one Creator as the basis of certain common rights: "**Did not the One who made me in the womb also make him? And did not the same One fashion us in the womb?**" (Job 31:15). Many centuries later, Saint Irenaeus would use the image of a melody to make the same point: "One who seeks the truth should not concentrate on the differences between one note and another, thinking as if each was created separately and apart from the others; instead, he should realize that one and the same person composed the entire melody."

... I sometimes wonder why, in light of this, it took so long for the Church unequivocally to condemn slavery and various forms of violence. Today, with our developed spirituality and theology, we have no excuses. Still, there are those who appear to feel encouraged or at least permitted by their faith to support varieties of narrow and violent nationalism, xenophobia and contempt, and even the mistreatment of those who are different....

We need to develop the awareness that nowadays we are either all saved together or no one is saved....

Poverty, decadence and suffering in one part of the earth are a silent breeding ground for problems that will end up affecting the entire planet....

War can easily be chosen by invoking all sorts of allegedly humanitarian, defensive or precautionary excuses, and even resorting to the manipulation of information. In recent decades, every single war has been ostensibly "justified."... At issue is whether the development of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and the enormous and growing possibilities offered by new technologies, have granted war an uncontrollable destructive power over great numbers of innocent civilians.... We can no longer think of war as a solution,

because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits. In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a "just war." Never again war!

Every war leaves our world worse than it was before. War is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil. Let us not remain mired in theoretical discussions, but touch the wounded flesh of the victims. Let us look once more at all those civilians whose killing was considered "collateral damage." Let us ask the victims themselves. Let us think of the refugees and displaced, those who suffered the effects of atomic radiation or chemical attacks, the mothers who lost their children, and the boys and girls maimed or deprived of their childhood. Let us hear the true stories of these victims of violence, look at reality through their eyes, and listen with an open heart to the stories they tell. In this way, we will be able to grasp the abyss of evil at the heart of war....

...International peace and stability cannot be based on a false sense of security, on the threat of mutual destruction or total annihilation, or on simply maintaining a balance of power…. In this context, the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons becomes both a challenge and a moral and humanitarian imperative....

...Saint John Paul II stated clearly and firmly that the death penalty is inadequate from a moral standpoint and no longer necessary from that of penal justice. There can be no stepping back from this position. Today we state clearly that "the death penalty is inadmissible" and the Church is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide.

...All Christians and people of good will are today called to work not only for the abolition of the death penalty, legal or illegal, in all its forms, but also to work for the improvement of prison conditions, out of respect for the human dignity of persons deprived of their freedom. I would link this to life imprisonment… A life sentence is a secret death penalty.

...The firm rejection of the death penalty shows to what extent it is possible to recognize the inalienable dignity of every human being and to accept that he or she has a place in this universe. If I do not deny that dignity to the worst of criminals, I will not deny it to anyone. I will give everyone the possibility of sharing this planet with me, despite all our differences.

I ask Christians who remain hesitant on this point, and those tempted to yield to violence in any form, to keep in mind the words of the book of Isaiah: "**They shall beat their swords into plowshares**" (2:4). For us, this prophecy took flesh in Christ Jesus who, seeing a disciple tempted to violence, said firmly: "**Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword**" (Mt 26:52). These words echoed the ancient warning: "**I will require a reckoning for human life. Whoever sheds the blood of a man, by man shall his blood be shed**" (Gen 9:5-6). Jesus' reaction, which sprang from his heart, bridges the gap of the centuries and reaches the present as an enduring appeal.

Ade Bethune

In my fraternal meeting, which I gladly recall, with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, "we resolutely [declared] that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility, and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood. These tragic realities are the consequence of a deviation from religious teachings. They result from a political manipulation of religions and from interpretations made by religious groups who, in the course of history, have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women… God, the Almighty, has no need to be defended by anyone and does not want his name to be used to terrorize people." For this reason I would like to reiterate here the appeal for peace, justice and fraternity that we made together:

"In the name of God, who has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and who has called them to live together as brothers and sisters, to fill the earth and make known the values of goodness, love and peace;

"In the name of innocent human life that God has forbidden to kill, affirming that whoever kills a person is like one who kills the whole of humanity, and that whoever saves a person is like one who saves the whole of humanity;

"In the name of the poor, the destitute, the marginalized and those most in need, whom God has commanded us to help as a duty required of all persons, especially the wealthy and those of means;

"In the name of orphans, widows, refugees and those exiled from their homes and their countries; in the name of all victims of wars, persecution and injustice; in the name of the weak, those who live in fear, prisoners of war and those tortured in any part of the world, without distinction;

"In the name of peoples who have lost their security, peace and the possibility of living together, becoming victims of destruction, calamity and war;

"In the name of human fraternity, that embraces all human beings, unites them and renders them equal;

"In the name of this fraternity torn apart by policies of extremism and division, by systems of unrestrained profit or by hateful ideological tendencies that manipulate the actions and the future of men and women;

"In the name of freedom, that God has given to all human beings, creating them free and setting them apart by this gift;

"In the name of justice and mercy, the foundations of prosperity and the cornerstone of faith;

"In the name of all persons of goodwill present in every part of the world;

"In the name of God and of everything stated thus far, [we] declare the adoption of a culture of dialogue as the path; mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard." Ω

Letters

Scott.

Each writer in the last *Catholic Radical* spoke truth to power, and it resonated within my spirit. However, Father George Zabelka's article, "Blessing the Bomb," was heartfelt!

Historians agree that Japan would have surrendered in August 1945, even if atomic bombs had not been dropped on an already defeated people—and the powers that be in Washington knew it. Yet, to add insult to injury, the US dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki three days later.

As Father George pointed out, that was not the most horrific act upon Japan. It was the silence of the ecumenical community.

Confronted with the plight of the Jewish community in Hilter's Germany and the atomic bombing of Japan, religious leaders were tone-deaf to the suffering of these people—God's children—made in His Image, *Imago Dei*!

I was touched to read where Father George confessed and repented of the role he played in the bombing of Japan. I sincerely believe that America needs to confess and repent of the role they have played in the atrocities of enslaving Africans, the genocide of indigenous people, and dropping atomic bombs on Japan.

Proverbs says, "**the Lord hates...hands that shed innocent blood**." MLK said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the silence of a friend yesterday, today, and tomorrow is complicity in injustice everywhere!

Dr. Bernard Reese, Ed.D
Worcester, Massachusetts

Scott:

According to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions' (ICAHD) website, Atta Jabber's farm—what is left of it after Israel expropriated land for a highway, gas station, and, more recently, the [Jewish] Settlement of Kiryat Arba—was destroyed. Fruit trees uprooted and irrigation equipment destroyed. It was during my Christian Peacemaker trip that our delegation met Atta and his family at his home and farm. During the evening, over tea, he reflected how settlers had occupied his home for a lengthy—six months?—period. On another occasion, Israeli soldiers confiscated his irrigation pipes. His was once a productive farm—grapes and vegetables.

My heart aches for Atta. The Israeli government denies a man his livelihood and dignity. The great imbalance of power allows Israel to subjugate the Palestinians.

David Maher
North Brookfield, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: After suffering 2,000 years of oppression culminating in the nightmare of the Holocaust, many Jews concluded that the creation of a Jewish state in their ancestral homeland was the only way to ensure their survival. But like the Puritans who fled religious persecution to come to America, Zionists violently displaced indigenous people. Those who call for justice for Palestinians are often labeled as anti-Semites or self-hating Jews. In a similar way, many white Americans resist and deride the Black Lives Matter movement's call for an end to systemic racism. Zionists and white American nationalists would do well to dig into the history of those in their society who do not enjoy the same economic and physical security as they do.

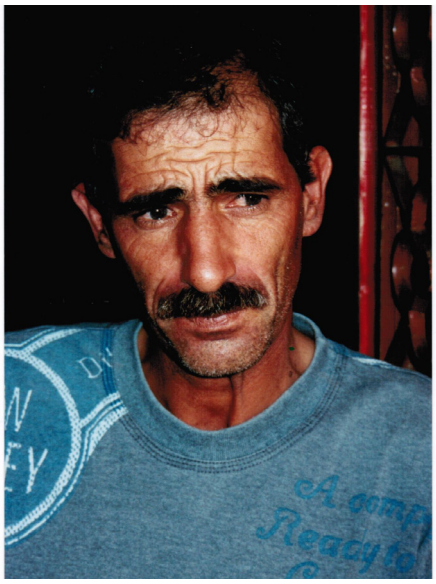
Atta Jabber's story is illustrative. Scott Schaeffer-Duffy visited Atta four times since 1989.

During his first visit, Scott saw a vibrant farm in a small valley outside the Israeli-occupied West Bank city of Hebron. Atta showed Scott caves that bore into the hillside behind his house where his ancestors used to store food before the advent of electricity. At that time, Palestinians were the victims of night raids by militants in the Jewish-only settlement of Kiryat Arba which abutts Atta's property. Despite the fact that Kiryat Arba confiscated some of Atta's land and uprooted 200 ancient olive trees, he remained hopeful about peace with Israel.

During Scott's second visit, Atta showed him how settlers had burned his car and those of three other Palestinian families. The militants also broke many windows including the one above Atta's infant son, whom Atta had to carry in his arms for three miles to the Hebron hospital. The boy went blind in one eye from broken glass. But Atta still did not give up on the idea of coexistence.

Scott also visited Kiryat Arba and saw upscale houses with palm trees, flowers, and green lawns. The community looked identical to wealthy suburbs of San Diego.

Two years later, Atta built a house for



Atta Jabber

his newly married son, but before they could move in, Jewish settlers occupied the building. Under Israeli law, unoccupied Palestinian property can become permanently Jewish. Atta challenged this in court and, after six months, the Israeli Supreme Court ordered the settlers to vacate the house.

During Scott's third visit, Atta showed hateful graffiti left by the settlers and a ruined well they had polluted with salt. Atta also said the settlers had urinated and defecated in every room before leaving the house, which has a cornerstone inscribed with a prayer for peace in Hebrew and

Arabic.

On his next visit, Scott saw Israeli military blockades preventing Atta and other Palestinian farmers from transporting ripe produce to market. Soldiers had also closed wells and confiscated the irrigation pipes from all Palestinian farms. By then, Atta looked beaten down.

During a meeting with Mazin Qumsiyeh, a Palestinian human rights activist and professor at Bethlehem and Birzeit Universities, Scott learned that the actions of Jewish settlers and the Israeli army had led many Palestinians to abandon their farms so they could live under the Palestinian Authority in Bethlehem. With little space and few jobs, an overcrowded Bethlehem had become an impoverished ghetto.

The recent report from the Israeli human rights activists at ICAHD confirms that ethnic cleansing of peaceful Palestinians continues unabated.

In light of George Floyd's murder, many people around the world are digging deep into the history of racial, ethnic, and religious oppression to discover ways to redress those wrongs. The American ideal that people of every nationality and religion deserve the same rights, precludes turning a blind eye to Israeli ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and our own systemic racism.

David Maher has written letters to protest the injustices heaped on Atta Jabber and his family. We encourage our readers to join him and the many groups of conscientious Jews who are working to alert politicians and the public to the pressing need for racial justice here and in Israel. (See: wwww.ichad.org.)

To Scott,
Thank you for your and Claire's enlightening articles.

I live in Bishop Cunha's diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts. He never publicized Pope Francis' article on racism. The bishop just took the Pope's observation on violence and ignored Pope Francis' warning on voting for Trump since abortion is not the only issue Catholics should worry about.

The Roman Catholic Church is a church of patriarchy, misogyny, and against LGBT people. The Episcopal Church is looking better and better to me.

I knew Owen McGowan through Pax Christi meetings and met his daughter, Jo McGowan, and support her mission for exceptional children in India. I read and love reading her articles in *Commonweal*. Her last article was "Why I'm Leaving the Catholic Church." We all must follow our conscience (our inner voice).

Thank you for your dedication to Dorothy Day's example — (my heroine).

Pierrette Sullivan
Somerset, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: Along with her letter, Ms. Sullivan sent an article from the September 2020 issue of Southern Living *entitled "Woman to Woman: Empowering vulnerable communities is this priest's calling." The article profiled Rev. Becca Stevens' work in Nashville, Tennessee to provide housing and other services to women survivors of trafficking, addiction, and prostitution. Rev. Stevens, an Episcopal priest for 23 years, is an example of how Catholicism can benefit from the ordination of women.We encourage our readers to work and pray for this change in Catholicism.*

Dear Scott and Claire,
I was moved and encouraged by your simple and yet so powerful "recipe" for surviving the current climate crisis and doing our part in building the kingdom of God. We do all we can, small and big, every day, always a bit more. And always joyful and full of hope. Thank you so very much!

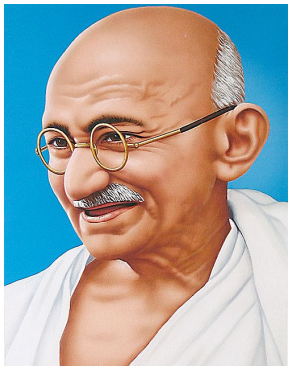
Maria Rodrigues
Brighton, Massachusetts

To the Editors,
Recently, the United States government withdrew its support for the World Health Organization (WHO). Though the organization has made some missteps, not unlike other organizations of similar size, by and large it has definitely been a very positive force for global health, e.g. tuberculosis, malaria, childhood nutrition. The WHO has also been very active in helping to provide basic X-rays to 60% of the world's population where they are lacking. Getting a simple chest X-ray could be a major undertaking. The World Health Imaging System, developed and promoted by WHO, is already providing badly needed technology to understand segments of the world's population.

To withdraw support to the WHO at this critical time will undoubtedly have a negative impact on global health. Now is the time to increase support, not abandon it. Our nation must get behind these efforts to fully support funding for the WHO. If funding is restored, the US would again be a major force in the ongoing efforts to address global health issues. The WHO issue, at this critical time, is a **health** issue, not a **political** issue.

Murrray Watnick, MD
Enfield, Connecticut

Editor's Note: Dr. Watnick, a nuclear medicine specialist, was an advisor to the WHO. He is the author of"Radiology for the People: A Basic Radiological System for Health Care in Developing Nations" which appeared in The Journal of Global Radiology.



Seven Deadly Social Sins

by Mahatma Gandhi

Politics without principle
Wealth without work
Commerce without morality
Pleasure without conscience
Education without character
Science without humanity
Worship without sacrifice. Ω

Mason Street Musings

Over the past two months, three new guests briefly joined the trio of men who live with us on Mason Street. J, a musician from Nigeria, was with us a little more than a week when police arrested him for violation of a restraining order. Early one Saturday morning, he unwisely decided to stop by his former wife's apartment — " to check on the garden," he told me — and came upon her new boyfriend. An altercation ensued, the police were called, and J carted off to jail. It was his third violation. A gentle guest, he apparently had a heap of legal troubles.

After J, came L. a woman who stayed with us twice before. Poor woman. She remains on the run from schizophrenia, denying her diagnosis and refusing medication. There is something poignant and familiar about her flight from self. Most of us have one shadow or another haunting us. L arrived smiling and cheerful enough; but by day three, she had clogged the toilet and devolved into expletives and delusional thinking. She made a few threats when I confronted

her, then stormed out of the house as she always does. I think her swift departures are an attempt to spare us the worst of her illness.

K, who stayed only one night, has also been living from pillar to post despite a decent disability check and the efforts of Elder Services. "It's been hotels and motels for the past two years," she told me. While here, she delighted in Dexter, the cat, but disdained Scott's home-cooked, vegetarian supper. "I don't eat that kind of stuff in the evening," she said when he brought her tray upstairs. "I was expecting a beef stew."

News of the nation roared through the house all this long autumn. Information junkies, we fed our addiction with radio broadcasts and hours spent scrolling through online accounts. Scott, who reads three newspapers a day and regularly consults worldometers, a website tracking COVID infections and death, has become the house crier. Every night at dinner, he informs us of presidential abuses and COVID's latest toll. Just in case, we hadn't heard. He looks out on this time of turmoil with energetic curiosity and faith. I shiver in fear and wake in early morning darkness with dire scenarios of the future swirling through my brain.

Enter Advent. The season rolls in as sure as morning sunrise, the Old Story, ever new, of God coming to be with us. How extraordinary given our refusals and stupidities. Once again, we will read the Advent passages about the murderers and doubters, the believers and proclaimers hinting at God's devotion and the story to come of the impoverished Bethlehem couple who were so absorbed in the Holy Birth, they had no room for dread.

Come Christmas we will celebrate that story which is more real than all the news roaring through the house. We will sing carols in a nearby park, not the nursing home we traditionally visit. We will decorate a Christmas tree in the garden lot out back, and yes, cook a vegetarian feast. In a thousand particular ways, we will express our confidence in the Incarnation. What a gift it is to know *this* story, to witness its unfolding in the lives of those around us. Merry Christmas, everyone!

Claire

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